
M E M O R I A L

O F

C O L O N E L M U L L E R,

Concerning the Swiss Regiment he had Directions to
raise for the Service of Great Britain in 1781.

Addressed to P A R L I A M E N T.

Sic Vos non Vobis, &c.

THE justice I am bound to do to a number of unfortunate officers who have lost every thing for enlisting under my banner; the sufferings of a dear family brought up in the bosom of affluence, and now reduced to extreme penury; the regard I have for my own honour, oblige me to lay before the representatives of the people all the transactions that attended the raising of the Swiss regiment in 1781, for the service of Great Britain: The sincere friendship we always entertained for that nation, induced us, in 1779, at one of our friendly meetings of the Cantons, to offer Great Britain a regiment, seeing it was at that time attacked by so many powerful enemies.

My countrymen, who had high notions of my abilities as a commander, and of my principles as a man, chose me for their Colonel, and entrusted the whole management of the affair to my care.

Nothing

Nothing but the love of arms, and the zeal I had to assist a noble country struggling against a world of enemies, could have induced me to such an undertaking; and I should not now have any reason to repent, had I had to deal with just and honest men. Commanding then two regiments at home, and possessed of fortune and emoluments to the amount of five hundred pounds a year, I might have lived happy in the midst of my friends and family: however fate would have it otherwise; my inclination prevailed.

I wrote a letter to Lord George Germain, and offered to raise a regiment of 1200 men, grenadiers, chasseurs, or dragoons, *on condition that I should be named Colonel, and have the appointment of my own officers.*

In the year 1781, J. F. Erskine, a Scotch gentleman, being in Switzerland, came to see me at my estate in the Canton of Berne. As I always had a great regard for the inhabitants of the British isles, I gave him a hearty welcome, and even lent him a horse which he promised to return before he left the country. A few months after, I received a letter from him in Bale, the place of his residence, that a lawsuit obliged him to go to London; and a little after another from London, dated January the 4th, 1781, mentioning that he had exchanged my horse for a carriage to make his journey; but that in order to make me amends, he would renew the offers of service I had tendered to Lord George Germain.

Though this last transaction did not leave such a favourable opinion as I had at first conceived of him, yet the enthusiasm that prompted me to the service, made me accept of his proposition; and I sent him my proposals in writing, which were pretty near the same I had sent before. The day he received them I was favoured with an answer, informing me that "Lord George Germain being still in the country, he had applied to Lord Amherst, Commander in Chief; that he had likewise arranged my proposals in a proper form, with my dutiful respects to his Majesty, without mentioning my name; having said only that I was a gentleman of the best families of Berne; that however he had apprised Lord Amherst, in confidence, of my name and qualifications; that his Lordship's answer was, that so good and rational a plan
" must

" must be laid before the King's Privy Council. Mr. Erskine adds, now my dear, Sir, your affair is before our good and gracious King."

On the 16th of January, 1781, he wrote thus: " your proposals have been accepted with eagerness, though an almost positive refusal had been given in writing; but their Lordships explained to me, by word of mouth, where the difficulty laid: I mean the noblemen to whom you applied, before I had the honour of knowing you."

On the 25th of the same month: " Being informed by Lord George Germain that your proposals have been unanimously accepted by the King's Council, I am commanded to let you know that fourteen persons of high rank in Europe have made like proposals, but that yours alone will be accepted."

March the 1st, 1781, he says, " I think the affair settled; we are obliged to Lord Geo. Germain for it."

The 30th of the same month: " I had been assured that the Council had agreed to your proposals; but Lord Amherst tells me he knows nothing of it."

April the 25th, same year, he tells me, " That Lord Amherst, as Commander in Chief of all the land forces, had directed him to acquaint me that the whole had been accepted, therefore to be ready to fulfil my engagement."

At last, on the 27th of the same month, he writes thus: " I have the pleasure of informing you, that I have just settled and signed the whole in a manner that, I believe, will satisfy you."

I then asked leave of the Regency to enter into the English service, and to keep, at the same time, the command of the troops that were under me; and likewise my places in the Republic. I received a very favourable and most gracious answer, granting me both.

Mr. Erskine came in the month of June, same year, to my house at Amfoldinguen, where I welcomed him as one of my best friends. He shewed me a paper in English, which

which I did not understand ; but thought to be my commission from the King of Great Britain ; which, however, he did not give me, saying, that I had no occasion to be uneasy till my arrival in England. He said, besides, that my regiment being destined for the East Indies, in case I should dislike that service, he would give me a handsome price for it. To that I made answer, that I was not disposed to sell it. He then added, that he had a bill to a large amount, that he would pay the raising of men, and was ordered so to do. Upon this I made my tour through Switzerland ; began to appoint my officers ; and they, to raise men in their different parts of the country, after they had obtained leave so to do. In the Canton of Berne, however, I was forbidden to raise any, and they obliged me to take an oath to that effect. The months of June and July were so spent, I, now and then, presenting my officers to Mr. Erskine, who was satisfied with the whole of my transactions. Having been some time absent, I received a letter from a first cousin of mine, the Baroness of Wildeg, who informed me that Mr. Erskine had hinted in company at Berne, that he himself was Colonel of that regiment. I shewed that letter to him, but he gave me his word and honour that there was no such thing. In spite of the reasons I had to suspect his duplicity, I still placed my confidence in him with that openness which is natural to a soldier. I learnt some time after that Erskine was attempting to raise men in the Canton of Berne : I sent him an express to desire him not to do any such thing, as by such a conduct he exposed me greatly. He promised to comply ; but one evening, when I least suspected it, he came to let me know that several of his recruiting parties had been sent to prison at Berne. I immediately favoured his escape ; and a few days after was put under an arrest by the Regency's order, and accused of having been concerned in that affair. I staid five months in confinement without being able to communicate with my officers, our letters being intercepted, and of course a stop was put during that time to the levies, as my officers knew nobody else, and would not serve under any body but me. Erskine had escaped to Rhinau, where he tried to raise men, but he could only pick up a few bad soldiers. The first opportunity I had in my confinement, I wrote to Lord George Germain and the Hon. William Norton, the then English Envoy in Switzerland, acquainting them with what had happened, and begged of them to assist me, as I was inno-

innocently oppressed. I likewise wrote to my false friend, Mr. Erskine, and asked for the commission he had promised to obtain for me from his Majesty. He answered from London, and, for the first time, took off the mask, saying, in a very arrogant manner, "I do not understand what you mean; you know that by my commission or capitulation, I had a right to name all the officers; and that if the levies were made in Germany or any where else, my nomination had the force of a brevet or commission, if I understand the word right. Have you lost the nomination I gave you? in that case I may send you a duplicate of it; but as to the commission itself, it depended upon the success of the levies." You may judge of my surprise, and what was my answer.

I was under an arrest at home, on suspicion of having broken my oath; and betrayed and deluded by the very man who had been the cause of my difficulties. My officers hearing of the place where I was, came from all parts, and had leave to visit me. What did I not feel then! What was my grief! — I had enticed some gentlemen from different services, viz. Prussia, Spain, France, Piedmont, and Holstein. They all came up to me for subsistence, and the expence they had incurred in raising men. I gave them all I had, and ruined my own family to satisfy them. Others applied to the Hon. William Norton, and laid their grievances before him. On the 8th of December, 1781, I was ordered to Berne to stand my trial. In my way thither I was informed by some intimate friends, that France having demanded satisfaction for my attempting to raise a regiment for the service of her enemies, I should be confined as long as the war should last between Great Britain and that monarchy, in the fortress of Arbourg.

This news made me leave the country; and in this alone I have been wanting in my duty to the Regency. I flew into the Emperor's dominions, and that great Prince granted me his protection. From Rheinfelden, in despair, I wrote, January the 28th, 1782, to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, who is much esteemed among us on account of his partiality to the Military. Whether the letter reached his Highness or not I know not, as I never had any answer. I wrote to the Regency for a passport; but, instead of complying with my request, I received for an answer, that I was condemned to an exile of ten years; to be

be deprived of all my places in the country; and to pay a fine of 425*l.* sterling. They took possession of my estate, which was sold for two-thirds of its real value; my helpless wife and children were turned out in the street; and I, overwhelmed with the clamours of the officers, whom my misfortunes had left in the greatest distress, for whom I felt more than for myself. I took some to my house at Rheinfelden, and shared my last farthing with them, which I have no doubt they will testify.

Erskine sent me the paltry sum of 34*l.* and made great promises if I would be quiet. I waited till January, 1783, and not hearing from him, I took the resolution of coming myself to London. There I found that our affair with the East-India Company was in arbitration. The Hon. William Norton reconciled me with Erskine; and this promised, that if I would make no noise, and not wear the regimentals, he would give me part of what he should receive, having laid his damages at 40,000*l.* on the Company's account: this the Hon. William Norton will testify. I stayed in London till the month of May; but the dearth of provisions obliged me to return on the frontiers of Switzerland. I learnt in the month of June, that the arbitrators had allowed a certain sum; but that Mr. Erskine having still cheated me, I should have nothing. In the month of July the newspapers revived us, by mentioning that there had been a motion made in Parliament to this effect, viz. To beg of His Majesty to take into his Royal consideration the case of the several officers of the Swiss regiment, who had lost their all. More joyful tidings could not be brought to us. I did myself the honour to write to several of the Ministers of State, praying not to be forgotten this time. My officers came up to me, saying, that this was a proper opportunity, and which they had long expected, to obtain redress from a magnanimous and generous nation they had endeavoured to serve. I advised them to have a petition properly drawn up, to send it to His Majesty's Ministers. I undertook the journey with them, and presented to His Majesty a statement of our grievances. I ask of a just and impartial nation, whether I am not to be considered as the Colonel of that corps, and whether I have a right to be placed in the list of those who are to be indemnified? Yet, astonishing to relate, Mr. Erskine did not put me in the list, nor all my officers; but only a few that I acknowledge as such, the others being men

men that I have not the least acquaintance with. I beg that the House will consider that I had applied to Lord George Germain before I knew Mr. Erskine: that in all those transactions he acted in my name; that afterwards he brought me His Majesty's orders in Switzerland, which the English Chargé d'Affaires confirmed; that he never mentioned in Switzerland that the regiment was asked in his name, but on the contrary denied it. When I had received a hint of it, that the passports he gave under his hand and seal were thus written: — "Let such and such persons pass, "they belonging to the Swiss regiment of Colonel Muller, "in the English service." — He knows as well as the then Ministry, that a regiment was offered me in Holland at that time. He knows that I lost all my fortune, and have been condemned to pay a heavy fine, besides to suffer a long exile; and nevertheless Mr. Erskine has not put me in the list of officers. Let Mr. Erskine's list be examined, and it will be found that some of the persons mentioned in it had been dead three years before; that some people were twice put in, by leaving out their Christian name; that there were children still sucking; and even some who had never any pretention to the title of officer.

Mine is very different — In it nobody is mentioned but those brave and generous officers who had formed with me the design of assisting the English nation at the time it was assailed by so many enemies. They all have put their names to the letter of attorney entrusted to their delegates now in London: they are of eight different Cantons, and attested under the seal of their Sovereign.

There is something in all this affair in which I am afraid Mr. Erskine has acted a double and most shameful part: nay, I am certain of it, since he maintained, before my arrival in London this last time, to the Hon. William Norton, that he had fully satisfied me, and that I was very well pleased with the list he had given; whereas I had never seen his list, nor ever heard a word of it.

After so notorious a falsehood, which the Hon. William Norton is, I hope, ready to attest, I ask if any thing advanced by Mr. Erskine may be credited? In the motion made some time ago by an honourable member of this House, relief was asked for those unfortunate Swiss officers who had lost their estates, houses, and fortunes in endeavouring to serve
the

the British nation ; sure such a motion could not be meant for Mr. Erskine, since he had nothing to lose. For my part, I can give proofs that I lost an estate, and other emoluments, to the amount of 500l. a year.

I have served my country during eighteen years with distinction — I appeal to my Canton — Nothing disadvantageous to my reputation had ever appeared. I have been rigorously punished, it is true ; but it was owing to Erskine's indiscretion, by raising men in a Canton where I had solemnly promised not to do it ; and besides, giving passports to his men as recruits belonging to the regiment of Colonel Muller. The Court of France complained ; and it was necessary to give her satisfaction.

I hope that the honourable House will take this Memorial into its serious consideration, and reflect, that in all this I acted under the sanction of the English Chargé d'Affaires at Berne, and by the orders of His Majesty's Ministers.

If Mr Erskine has been daring enough to make an ill use of the most sacred names, he certainly deserves the most severe punishment. The honour of the nation is concerned ; and the zeal shewn by my countrymen to give assistance in time of need, ought not to be repaid with ingratitude. I only beg of this honourable House, that I may be reimbursed of my expences, and my officers indemnified. I ask nothing for all my trouble ; I ask no compensation for the cruel separation I have been obliged to suffer from a tender wife and family : since three years an exile, I will remain satisfied, if this honourable House would procure us the means of returning peaceably into our country, by entreating His Majesty to direct his Ambassador at the Court of France to speak in our favour.

T H E E N D.